

NSC BRIEFING

1 April 1958

BACKGROUND PIECE ON YUGOSLAVIA

- I. The published program for the seventh party congress to begin on 22 April shows that the Yugoslavs will reaffirm ideological views which are basically in conflict with the USSR.
  - A. The program implies strong criticism of the bloc for failing to recognize changes in the contemporary world, it emphatically rejects the ideological superiority accorded the USSR by other Communist states, it denounces those who regard as "revisionism" every effort toward further development of Marxist thought, and it reflects the view that only Communist parties have a monopoly on forms of progress toward socialism.
  - B. There are reports concerning impending shifts in Yugoslav leadership: the most persistent rumor is that President Tito (65 years old) will turn over the actual running (but not control) of the government and party to Kardelj and Rankovic, respectively--his two top vice presidents.
- II. Tito hopes that his continuing active support for Soviet foreign policy will help to counter Moscow's anticipated irritation over the aggressive presentation of Yugoslav road to socialism at the congress.

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A. While Yugoslav officials may still attempt to define Belgrade's position as uncommitted, the Yugoslav press, for the present at least, has dropped all pretense of impartiality on East-West questions.

1. Tito declared on 16 March that Yugoslavs cannot "remain indifferent" to the construction of rocket bases.

(a) West German nuclear armament is now a major target for Yugoslav attacks. Editorials depict German militarism as again threatening world.

(b) The US embassy in Belgrade observes that the Yugoslavs may plan to take the issue of German nuclear armament to the UN.

(c) Italy and Greece also have been subject to Yugoslav attacks concerning rocket bases, but to lesser extent.

2. While the Yugoslavs may be concerned over the increasing power of Khrushchev, Tito lost no time in congratulating him on his election as premier.

III. Since last fall, when, on the one hand, Yugoslav recognition of the East German regime greatly stimulated western suspicions and when, on the other, Tito voluntarily excluded himself from the Moscow declaration of communist states, Belgrade has been confronted with increasing international isolation.

A. In his New Year's address, Tito stated that any summit talks should be expanded to include Yugoslavia and other uncommitted states.

1. Since then, obtaining a seat at the summit has been a major Yugoslav foreign policy objective.

2. To this end, Yugoslav propaganda has generally supported Soviet policy on summit talks, emphasizing the role Yugoslavia could play.

IV. Despite Belgrade's pleasure over receiving a better press in USSR, Tito is concerned over continuing bloc silence regarding the forthcoming party congress and program.

A. An opportunity to smoke out the bloc's intentions regarding the congress may have been instrumental in Tito's agreement to accept Kadar's long standing request for a meeting.

B. The basic ideological feud with the bloc will continue to bar any genuine Yugoslav-USSR rapproachment.

1. Tito still would probably scuttle correct state relations with the USSR should Moscow attempt to pressure him into ideological conformity.

- V. In the Yugoslav national elections on 23-26 March, the regime was re-endorsed by 94 percent of the registered voters, ostensibly increasing the regime's popular support, as only 89.4 percent of voters supported the regime in last national elections in 1953.
- A. A large endorsement was obviously sought by the regime as a justification of its programs.
1. The regime apparently feels genuine concern over local dissatisfaction, and is attempting to correct issues from which it arises.
  2. Dissatisfaction, however, is not of sufficient degree to threaten the regime's stability.